

Project Report
Alaska Public Broadcasting, Inc.
Project Number No. 174-05
April 1, 2006 – June 31, 2006

Project Title & Summary

Four project work scopes are embodied in this grant award. The majority of the award is dedicated to a single work scope, that being the Capital Grant Program.

Alaska Public Broadcasting Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project

The purpose of the Public Broadcasting Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project is to provide much needed capital revenue for addressing system-wide infrastructure and technology priorities. In 2004, a system-wide infrastructure and technology needs assessment, ranging from basic tools to new facilities, approximated \$38 Million. The project will be in partnership with the Rasmuson Foundation and potentially other foundations. Total Denali Commission funding: \$4,127,000

Public Radio Conversion to Digital Transmission

Alaska's 26 public radio stations have begun the process of changing their primary transmission equipment to the new standard for digital broadcasting. Funding the appropriate needs for all of the stations will cost approximately \$3 Million. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has already committed \$2.1 Million toward this total and the Rasmuson Foundation has committed some \$682,519 toward the total. This critical funding will assure the project has the capacity to meet anticipated as well as some unanticipated needs. Total Denali Commission funding: \$423,000

Alaska Digital Distribution Network

Alaska Public Broadcasting Data Network is to interconnect all of Alaska's public radio and television stations by means of a digital intranet and the internet. This project was originally funded by the Denali Commission in FY04. \$1.9 Million was set aside to build this modern telecommunications infrastructure. Additional funding is necessary for completion of this project. Total Denali Commission funding: \$100,000

Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) & Satellite Interconnection Revitalization

Repair and replacement of existing broadcast infrastructure used to deliver public telecommunications services via radio and television to Alaskans all across the State. This project was originally funded by the Denali Commission in FY04. Additional funding is necessary for completion of this project. Total Denali Commission funding: \$100,000

Reporting Period: April 1, 2006 – June 31, 2006

Progress and activity during the second quarter of 2006 occurred entirely within two work scope components: the facilities and equipment modernization project and the digital conversion project.

Facilities & Equipment Modernization Project – Capital Grant Program

Overall progress to date includes successful development and implementation of this capital grant program. APBI modeled the grant program after three well established programs which are familiar to public broadcasters in Alaska:

1. Rasmuson Foundation.
2. Corporation for Public Broadcasting.
3. Public Telecommunications & Facilities Program, U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

We focused on the Rasmuson Foundation approach while incorporating some good ideas from the other two entities. We sought a high degree of integrity and accountability throughout development of the grant program.

Milestones reached since project inception:

- Development of grant program concept and materials: overview, guidelines, priorities, procedures and panel review process for the first two rounds; including development of application paperwork and administrative systems.
- Announcement of the Round One grant period occurred July 27, 2005. Applications were distributed electronically as well as via U.S. mail to all eligible entities. Deadline for the applications was September 30, 2005.
- A five person, independent grant panel met in Anchorage October 16-17, 2005 to review Round One proposals and make recommendations resulting in seventeen projects being awarded \$788,669 toward a total project cost of \$1,206,178. Collectively, the stations provided a 35% match toward the total project cost.
- The panel process went smoothly and produced a legitimate independent review of the proposals per the grant program priorities and guidelines. It was evident that the panel had read all proposals and had come to the meeting ready to identify and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals. Throughout the review, the APBI staff provided additional station and system information to the panel as requested.
- On October 26, 2005 the APBI board of directors approved the overall package of recommendations made by the panel and management. Round One award announcements were made October 31, 2005.

- Announcement of the Round Two grant period occurred March 10, 2006. Applications were distributed electronically as well as via U.S. mail to all eligible entities. Deadline for the applications was June 1, 2006.

Two specific milestones occurred during the reporting period April 1, 2006 – June 31, 2006

- Round Two received seventeen proposals requesting \$1,178,290 in financial assistance toward total project costs of \$1,377,396. Collectively, the stations provided approximately 15% match toward the total project cost.
- A five person, independent grant panel met in Anchorage June 29-30, 2006 to review proposals and make recommendations. The panel recommended that eight proposals be funded with no conditions attached, and six be funded with conditions attached. Three proposals were not funded although the panel recommended that the applicants be given an opportunity to resubmit their proposals in order to address panel concerns. The resubmitted proposals will be reviewed and a determination to award will be made at that time.

Next Steps:

The APBI board will approve the package of panel recommendations. Award announcements will be made and grant agreements will be sent to applicants. Resubmitted proposals will be reviewed and a determination to award will be made at that time. Target date for completion of the overall project is December 31, 2008.

Public Radio Conversion to Digital Transmission

APBI continues to provide engineering advice, counsel and overall project management for the conversion to digital broadcasting in Alaska.

Progress to date includes:

- Installation and conversion of stations began in November 2005 in Southeast Alaska at KRBD Ketchikan and KSTK Wrangell; the first non-commercial digital broadcasters in Alaska. Digital conversion has also occurred at KCAW Sitka, KTOO Juneau and KFSK Petersburg.
- Coordination of group bids on behalf of twenty three out of twenty six stations has been completed. Coordination of group equipment purchases has proven to be cost efficient, with most items coming in below the original estimates per station.
- Group purchasing also results in standardizing core transmission technology throughout the statewide system. This in turn fosters more efficient and cost effective technical support within the system today and in the future.

- Technical training on new equipment has occurred for some key station technical staff including two engineers who had a full week of digital transmission equipment training at Harris Broadcasters in Quincy, Illinois. Technical support for station design and installation work of their digital transmission facilities is on-going with all stations.

Digital conversion project activity detail for reporting period April 1, 2006 – June 31, 2006:

A. Round I Radio Conversion

- KTOO-FM, Juneau:** The rest of the equipment has arrived from Broadcast Electronics and has been installed. KTOO-FM will shortly begin broadcasting a third digital channel. They are the first station either non commercial or commercial that is broadcasting a second digital channel.
- KCHU-AM, Valdez:** The transmitter and antenna tuning unit (ATU) have been moved into the transmitter building. Installation is planned for the month of August, 2006.
- KYUK-AM, Bethel:** The completion of the project awaits the design and construction of a new broadcast tower. In AM broadcasting the tower is the antenna. The existing tower has severe structural deficiencies and is too short. This tower should be designed, fabricated, and installed in 2007.

B. Round II Radio conversion:

- Transmission Equipment:** Transmission equipment ordered from Harris is arriving at many of the stations. Installation of the transmitters will commence the first week of August.
- FM Antennas:** FM antennas for three stations are being built and adjusted by Shively. They should be shipped from the factory and arrive in Alaska the end of August. Upon arrival they will be installed by the tower riggers as their schedule permits.
- HD Radio Antenna Tuning Units:** Each AM station has a tower that acts as an antenna. It also has a device known as the Antenna Tuning Unit (ATU). The design of this unit depends on some variables that are different for each station. We will shortly contract for a consultant to design the units. Then a contract will be let to Kintronics corporation to construct them. We expect that they will be delivered twelve to sixteen weeks after order.

The systems that were installed in Southeast Alaska have been performing according to designed specifications. In particular KTOO-FM, Juneau is having great success with HD Radio transmission. They are the first station in Alaska to transmit two independent digital program streams. They will soon add a third.